

# News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

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## **MARKEY CALLS ON CIGAR INDUSTRY TO END PRODUCT PLACEMENT IN MOVIES AND TELEVISION SHOWS WIDELY VIEWED BY TEENAGERS**

**WASHINGTON, DC** - U.S. Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA) today called on the Cigar Association of America, Inc. (CAA) to urge its member companies to voluntarily end the practice of product placement arrangements with Hollywood motion picture and television producers, a practice that was highlighted in a three-part investigative report in the Baltimore Sun. Rep. Markey, the ranking Democrat on the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications, Trade and Consumer Protection, also asked Norman F. Sharp, president of the CAA, if the cigar industry would voluntarily turn over to the House Commerce Committee, any internal industry documents dealing with marketing strategies the industry has employed which may be targeted towards young people. Rep. Markey made these requests this morning during a Subcommittee hearing with tobacco industry and other industry witnesses.

Rep. Markey said, "I am very troubled by the fact that cigars are being glamorized in movies like 'Independence Day.' In a scene that any teenage boy would find appealing, the movie's star Will Smith had to have a cigar before he could fly off and save the world from evil aliens. The movie was rated PG-13 which all but guarantees that teenagers made up a huge percentage of the 60 million Americans who saw the film at theaters nationwide. Many of these kids probably went back two and three times. What makes this story so disturbing is that the Baltimore Sun reported that cigar manufacturers **paid** Hollywood brokers to feature their product in the movie. This is wrong and it must stop."

"The CAA indicated in written testimony that they believed that the cigar industry was excluded from the tobacco settlement negotiations between the attorneys general and the major cigarette manufacturers because they, 'do not market their products to teenagers and adolescents.' I have my doubts about this statement and I look forward to seeing industry documents on their marketing strategies, and specifically, how much the industry has spent on product placement inducements. I am encouraged by Mr. Sharp's stated willingness to provide the Committee with this information," said Rep. Markey.

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